

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MEXICO 10881

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, MX, US
SUBJECT: MEXICAN NEWS COVERAGE PRESIDENT LOPEZ PORTILLO
INTERVIEW ON ILLEGAL ALIEN PROBLEM

1. MAJOR MEXICAN DAILIES JUNE 27 GAVE FRONT-PAGE BANNER
HEADLINE PLAY TO WIRE SERVICE ARTICLES ON LOPEZ PORTILLO
INTERVIEW WITH USN&WR CONCERNING ILLEGAL ALIEN PROBLEM.

2. THE SALIENT THEME OF INTERVIEW AS REPORTED BY UPI AND
AP IS PRESIDENT LOPEZ PORTILLO'S DECLARATION THAT THE
ONLY SOLUTION TO IMMIGRANT PROBLEM IS GREATER ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT OF MEXICO. LOPEZ PORTILLO SUGGESTED THAT IT
IS IN USG'S INTEREST TO DEVELOP A MORE EQUITABLE FINAN-
CIAL AND COMMERCIAL RELATIONSHIP WITH MEXICO, THEREBY
ASSISTING MEXICO TO CREATE MORE JOBS FOR ITS PEOPLE AT
HOME. LOPEZ PORTILLO IS ALSO QUOTED AS STATING THAT
MEXICAN LABORERS IN THE U.S. ARE NOT COMPETING WITH
AMERICANS, SINCE THE MEXICANS ACCEPT THE POORLY PAID,
UNATTRACTIVE JOBS THAT AMERICANS REFUSE. HE ADDED THAT
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THE SOLUTION TO THE FLOW OF ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS CANNOT LIE
IN GREATER ADMINISTRATIVE OR POLICE CONTROL, BECAUSE OF
THE GREAT NUMBER OF LEGAL BORDER CROSSINGS IN BOTH DIREC-
TIONS EACH DAY.

3. COMMENT: THIS INTERPRETATION OF LOPEZ PORTILLO
IS LIKELY TO BE REFLECTED IN POSITION OF GOM OFFICIALS

DURING THE VISIT OF THE WASHINGTON BRIEFING TEAM ON JULY 1 (STATE 149103). WHILE THERE IS NOTHING NEW IN THE PRESIDENT'S VIEW, THE FACTUAL BASIS FOR HIS ARGUMENT ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AS THE ONLY SOLUTION TO THE ILLEGAL PROBLEM REQUIRES FURTHER EXAMINATION. THE IDENTIFICATION OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AS ONLY SOLUTION IS A SIMPLIFICATION, AND THE AUTOMATIC CONNECTION BETWEEN MORE JOBS IN MEXICO AND A DECLINE IN ILLEGAL MIGRATION TO THE U.S. IS LOGICAL; BUT IT REMAINS UNPROVEN WHETHER THE CAUSE-EFFECT RELATIONSHIP WOULD BE BORNE OUT EMPIRICALLY. AN ADDITIONAL QUESTION REGARDING THE VALIDITY OF LOPEZ PORTILLO'S THESIS ARISES FROM AN INTERPRETATION OF CERTAIN STATISTICS IN THE WAYNE CORNELIUS REPORT WHICH SUGGEST THAT MANY ILLEGAL MIGRANTS GO TO THE U.S. IN SEARCH OF HIGHER PAY AND A BETTER JOB--THAT IS, MANY ARE NOT NECESSARILY THE CHRONICALLY UNEMPLOYED HERE. A FURTHER UNDECIDED QUESTION, LIKEWISE REQUIRING MORE RESEARCH, IS THE LOPEZ PORTILLO PREMISE THAT MEXICAN LABORERS IN THE U.S. DO NOT COMPETE WITH U.S. CITIZENS FOR JOBS. FINALLY, THE MEXICAN BIRTH RATE MAY MAKE IT PHYSICALLY IMPOSSIBLE FOR SOME TIME TO REDUCE SIGNIFICANTLY THE ABSOLUTE NUMBER OF UNEMPLOYED MEXICANS EVEN IF SPECIAL COMMERCIAL RELATIONSHIP WERE INITIATED. THOMPSON

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